

Nevada County Transportation Commission

The Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Nevada County. NCTC coordinates state and federal transportation programs for Nevada County, the City of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and the Town of Truckee.

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Nevada County District IV Supervisor

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Nevada County Transportation Commission Newsletter

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"Creating a better future by building upon successes of the past"



SR 49 Widening Becomes A Reality



Five-lane widening at Combie/Wolf Road, with right-turn lane onto Combie Road, and heritage light poles

The five-lane widening project on State Route 49, southbound from the Combie Road/Wolf Road intersection to just south of the Bear River Bridge, was completed this month.

Did you ever sit in grid-locked, rush hour traffic on SR 49 and wonder if anything could be done to relieve the congestion?

When safety concerns and decreased level of service became an issue along SR 49, between the Bear River Bridge and Combie/Wolf Road, the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) took action. See page 2 of this newsletter for more information on how this road improvement in Nevada County was accomplished.

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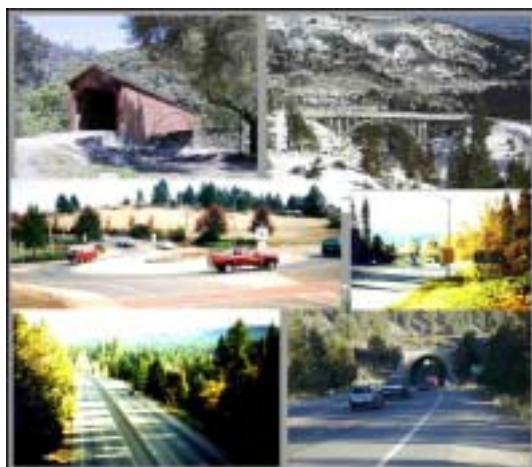
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Enhanced bridge railing and 5-lane widening at Bear River Bridge

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SR 49 Widening – Continued

A completion ceremony was held on July 20, 2004 for the widening project on SR 49 between the Bear River Bridge and Combie/Wolf Road. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) hosted the event to celebrate the opening of this heavily traveled section of SR 49. The long awaited improvements ease traffic congestion in Nevada County and Placer County, especially during commute times.



Present at the completion ceremony, from left: Larry Rhoden – Teichert Construction VP/Manager, Dan Landon – NCTC Executive Director, Jody Lonergan – Caltrans Dist. 3 Director, Tom Brannon – Caltrans Dist. 3 Project Manager, Linda Stevens – Grass Valley City Council member and past NCTC Commissioner, CHP Lt. Cary McGagin

This widening project was included in the 1998 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and was one of the first local projects to benefit from the new cost-sharing law (SB 45, Kopp 1997), set up between Caltrans and regional agencies. Under SB 45, maintenance and rehabilitation projects on the State Highway System have the highest priority. These projects are included in the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP). Remaining funds are divided into two funding pots, 75% into the Regional Improvement Program (RIP) and 25% into the Interregional Improvement Program (IIP). Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, like NCTC, select projects for the RIP and Caltrans nominates projects for IIP funds. To fund the widening of SR 49 from Placer County to the Combie/Wolf intersection, NCTC provided \$5.3 million of RIP funds and Caltrans used \$6.5 million from the IIP. Proposed projects go before the California Transportation Commission for final approval.

Caltrans completed design and environmental work, and the contract was awarded to Teichert Construction of Sacramento in October 2002. Teichert maintained an aggressive approach to the project schedule and capitalized on the mild fall weather in 2002 to start the widening of the Bear River Bridge before winter set in. At the completion ceremony Caltrans District 3 Director, Jody Lonergan, stated the project was under budget by \$1.4 million and finished three months ahead of schedule.



Bear River Bridge railing enhancements

Local input from interested citizens and NCTC Commissioners, as well as input from Caltrans employees, led to design changes that enhanced the project. These included ornamental heritage light poles and street lamps at the Combie/Wolf Road intersection, bridge rail enhancements, striping improvements at both Combie and Streeter Road intersections of SR 49, relocation of the Park-and-Ride lot at Streeter Road, and site preparation for a future gateway monument sign entering Nevada County near the Bear River Bridge. [NCTC](#)

New NCTC Commissioner

The Nevada County Transportation Commission proudly introduces our newest Commissioner, **Conley Weaver**. Mr. Weaver was elected as Mayor of Nevada City on April 12, 2004. He replaces Kerry Arnett on the Transportation Commission, who served as Nevada City's representative for four years.

Conley Weaver has lived in Nevada County since 1991. He is presently celebrating 48 years of marriage to Mary Louise, and has a grown daughter, Sydney Holland Weaver, who is a graduate of Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY.

Conley attended Sacramento Junior College and the University of California, Berkeley, College of Architecture. From there he served four years in the United States Navy as a Commissioned Officer in the Civil Engineer Corps, working to construct and maintain facilities for design, construction, and repair of nuclear submarines and warships at Mare Island Naval Shipyard. His professional career includes a position as Vice President, Design Director, Project Manager, and Coordinating Architect for the national architectural firm of Welton Becket Associates. As principal and founding member of the Weaver Architectural Group, he coordinated and managed the design and construction of more than one billion dollars worth of projects, mostly in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Conley and Mary Louise bought the Red Castle Inn of Nevada City on October 15, 1985 and enjoy hosting visitors to Nevada County. This historical landmark was built in 1860 and is the oldest continually operated Bed and Breakfast Inn in California. Conley has also served as a Nevada City Planning Commissioner, was the coordinating architect for the Nevada City Hall restoration and the Nevada County Railroad Museum, is a founding member of the Broad Street Jazz Quartet, and says he is totally enamored with the game of golf. [NCTC](#)



SR 49 Safety Clinics

The second SR 49 Safety Clinic will be held September 24th at 4:00 p.m. in the Forest Springs Mobile Home Park.

Ann Marie Robinson of Caltrans developed this workshop to focus on safety issues at the SR 49 and La Barr Meadows intersection. The first Safety Clinic was held on March 23rd at the Mountain Air Mobile Park to address concerns of those living and driving along this stretch of the highway. Wayne Raley, CHP and AARP Driver Safety Program expert spoke, as did CHP Lt. Cary McGagin, Transit Service Manager Bill Derrick, John Rumsey of DOTS, NCTC Executive Director Dan Landon, and Ann Marie. We are looking forward to another good turnout in September. [NCTC](#)

Upcoming NCTC Meeting

“THERE WILL BE NO AUGUST MEETING”

The next meeting of the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) is scheduled as follows:

Wednesday, September 15, 2004 at 8:30 a.m., Nevada City Council Chambers, 317 Broad Street, Nevada City, CA

“The Bridges of Nevada County” – Part 3

Continuing our series on “*The Bridges of Nevada County*” (see September and November 2003 newsletters), we move into the *city limits of Nevada City* to take a look at the **Pine Street Bridge**. Bill Falconi, City Engineer for Nevada City, spearheaded the 1996 project to replace and replicate the 1903 bridge; truly an engineering feat. Before we go into the details of that project, here is a bit of history.

An earlier bridge site was located downstream of the current site, a short distance from Bonanza Market and Miners Foundry on Bridge Street. The log bridge was at creek level and would wash out each winter. So, in 1862 Nevada City hired Andrew S. Hallidie, a 25 year-old engineer from San Francisco, to construct a one-lane suspension bridge at Pine Street. This new location raised the bridge surface to a safer level above Deer Creek. Bridge parts were fabricated in San Francisco and brought



Andrew Hallidie's Suspension Bridge built in 1862 at Pine Street

to Nevada County by train and wagon through Folsom and Marysville (before the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad was built). It was heralded as the largest suspension bridge in California at the time. Mr. Hallidie went on later to create the world's first cable car system in San Francisco, using the same steel cable technology. A sign at the entrance to the bridge stated you would be fined \$50 if you crossed the bridge faster than a walk. Traffic calming efforts are still in effect today, with stop signs posted at both entrances to the bridge.



Gault Bridge built in 1903 over Deer Creek

The suspension bridge was replaced in 1903, as the automobile gained popularity, with a two-lane, three hinge, laced arch truss bridge, constructed from painted carbon steel, and built over the one-lane stone abutments. It was referred to as the “**Gault Bridge**”, named after the Mayor of Nevada City, Alexander Gault – a baker by trade, who died in office while the bridge was being built. The bridge was a vital link to and from downtown Nevada City, and was still heavily traveled after the Golden Center Freeway was built in the 1960's.

Pine Street Bridge—The Gault Bridge was torn down in 1996 and replaced with a close-replica of the 1903 bridge. The final



promenade of Gault Bridge was celebrated on January 15, 1996 and 10 months later, on November 16th, the new bridge was dedicated and opened to traffic. The **Pine Street Bridge**, as it became known, kept the design of the original steel lattice work but used pins and steel supports two to three times



Gault Bridge demolished in 1996 Entering Nevada City on Pine St. Bridge

thicker, replaced the wooden deck with steel, has larger concrete footings on both banks, is slightly wider, and is a stronger and safer structure. To replicate the historic design and riveted look of the 1903 bridge, specially manufactured bolts and washers were used. The old bridge could only support about 3 tons, while the new one has no weight limit. The bridge was designed by Foster Engineering of Orinda and built by West Coast Bridge Inc. of Benicia. “Weathering” steel, which does not require paint, was shipped from Bethlehem, PA to Montana for fabrication of the structure.



Dan Reinhart re-cutting stones



Old end post



End post reused

During construction, the single lane 1862 stone abutments were dismantled and Dan Reinhart of Nevada City re-quarried the rocks for reuse on the new two-lane abutments. Beside reusing the stone, the decorative end posts from the 1903 bridge were the only other original pieces used on the 1996 bridge. Other salvaged bridge parts have been used around town, as needed, according to Nevada City's Engineer Bill Falconi.

Early in the project, city officials decided to retrieve the two 2,500 pound steel anchors 20 feet below the road surface, that were used in 1862 to secure the suspension bridge cables. Revolutionary designs for their time, one anchor will be displayed in Nevada City and the second anchor is being considered for display at the Smithsonian Institute.



Steel anchors used for suspension bridge were removed in 1996

Since the Gault Bridge was deemed eligible for the National Register of Historical Places in 1985, a National Historical Preservation Grant funded 80% of the \$3.2 million tab for the new bridge, with Nevada City and Caltrans funding the rest. The 1996 Pine Street Bridge won national and state awards for its unique steel construction and historical replication of the 1903 Gault Bridge (see Modern Steel Construction magazine, Sept. 1998). [NCTC](#)

[Thank you to Bill Falconi for providing history and photos. Some information was taken from dedication pamphlets, an article by Bob Wyckoff, and Cornerstone Realty Nevada County History online. Current bridge photos by Mike Woodman of NCTC.]